

VAUGHN STEWART
Legislative District 19
Montgomery County



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 151
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3528
800-492-7122 Ext. 3528
Vaughn.Stewart@house.maryland.gov

CHIEF DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Government, Labor, and Elections
Committee

Vice Chair
Democratic Caucus

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Testimony in Support of HB 36

Annotated Code - Terminology - Clergy and Churches, Faith Institutions, and Places of Worship

Testimony by Delegate Vaughn Stewart

March 9, 2026 | Rules & Executive Nominations Committee

What the Bill Does

Over the years, the Maryland General Assembly has made legislation to create many special regulations for institutions of faith. These regulations provide tax exemptions, zoning requirements, licensure requirements, and more, highlighting their importance. However, Maryland's Code and laws only specifically refer to "churches"—142 times to be exact—and no other types of faith institutions such as synagogues or mosques. To solve this issue, HB36 alters the code by changing all instances of churches to be "faith institutions".

Furthermore, the code also refers to "clergymen" a number of times, yet not all members of the clergy are men. Thus the bill increases the inclusivity of the Maryland Code by changing the "clergymen" to "members of the clergy". This better includes all religious leaders— regardless of gender.

Why It Matters

Maryland is a place that is welcome to synagogues, mosques, temples, and all other places of worship for all faiths. This bill is essential to ensuring equal protection under the law for all faith practices in Maryland.

I urge the committee for a favorable report.